
WOMEN & THE 1916 RISING

An educational resource

Niamh Murray, 2016.

Preface

This pack is intended to provide some basic information on the women who participated in the 1916 Easter Rising. Each profile contains brief information about the woman's role in the Rising and what happened to her in the aftermath. Included in each profile is an interesting fact about each woman, not related to the Rising, which may inspire further research.

Women and the Rising: Background

Roughly 270-300 women took part in the events of Easter Week. The women who participated in the Rising were either members of The Irish Citizen Army or Cumann na mBan. During the Rising, women were represented in all garrisons, except Boland's Mills. Its Commandant, Eamon de Valera, refused to allow women have any role in events. Margaretta Keogh, a nurse, was the only woman to be killed during the Rising. She was shot accidentally when she went to help an injured man near the South Dublin Union garrison.

The Irish Citizen Army

James Connolly, leader of the Irish Citizen Army was a firm supporter of women's suffrage and believed women should be treated equally, hence the women in the ICA played a larger role in the Rising than those in Cumann na mBan. Some of them were armed and two of them held rank positions (Markievicz as Lieutenant & Lynn as Captain). The majority of the ICA women were stationed in St. Stephen's Green/Royal College of Surgeons and City Hall during Easter Week.

Cumann na mBan

Women were not allowed join the Irish Volunteers, so a group of women who wanted to take an active role in the nationalist struggle, decided to set up their own organisation. In 1914, they met in Wynn's Hotel on Dublin's Abbey St, where they formed Cumann na mBan. It was closely linked to the Irish Volunteers – Cumann na mBan fundraised for the Volunteers and the Volunteers trained Cumann na mBan in army drills and manoeuvres. Members of Cumann na mBan cooked food for the men and delivered messages, ammunition and food between the rebel garrisons. They also administered First Aid to the Injured, but they were not armed and acted under the orders of the Irish Volunteers at all times. There was a large number of Cumann na mBan women in the Marrowbone Lane garrison, but they were represented in numerous others, including the Four Courts and the GPO. Cumann na mBan became a much more significant organisation in the years which followed the Rising.

DR. KATHLEEN LYNN



1874 -1955

CAPTAIN – IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON – CITY HALL (TOOK COMMAND WHEN SEÁN CONNOLLY
KILLED)

ARREST » SHIP ST. BARRACKS » RICHMOND BARRACKS » KILMAINHAM

FACT: KATHLEEN LYNN WAS ONE OF THE FIRST FEMALE DOCTORS IN
IRELAND. SHE ESTABLISHED ST. ULTAN'S INFANT HOSPITAL IN 1919.

HELENA MOLONY



1883 -1967

MEMBER — IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON — CITY HALL

ARREST » SHIP ST BARRACKS » RICHMOND BARRACKS » KILMAINHAM
GAOL » AYLESBURY PRISON, UK

FACT: HELENA MOLONY WAS AN ACTRESS IN THE ABBEY THEATRE WHO
GAVE UP HER ACTING CAREER TO BECOME A TRADE UNION LEADER.

COUNTESS MARKIEVICZ



1868 -1927

LIEUTENANT – IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON – ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/RCSI

ARREST » RICHMOND BARRACKS » KILMAINHAM GAOL » MOUNTJOY
PRISON » AYLESBURY PRISON, UK

FACT: IN 1918 CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED AS MP IN IRELAND AND BRITAIN. SHE WAS ALSO THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED AS A CABINET MINISTER IN EUROPE WHEN SHE WAS APPOINTED MINISTER FOR LABOUR IN 1919.

NELLIE GIFFORD



1880 – 1971

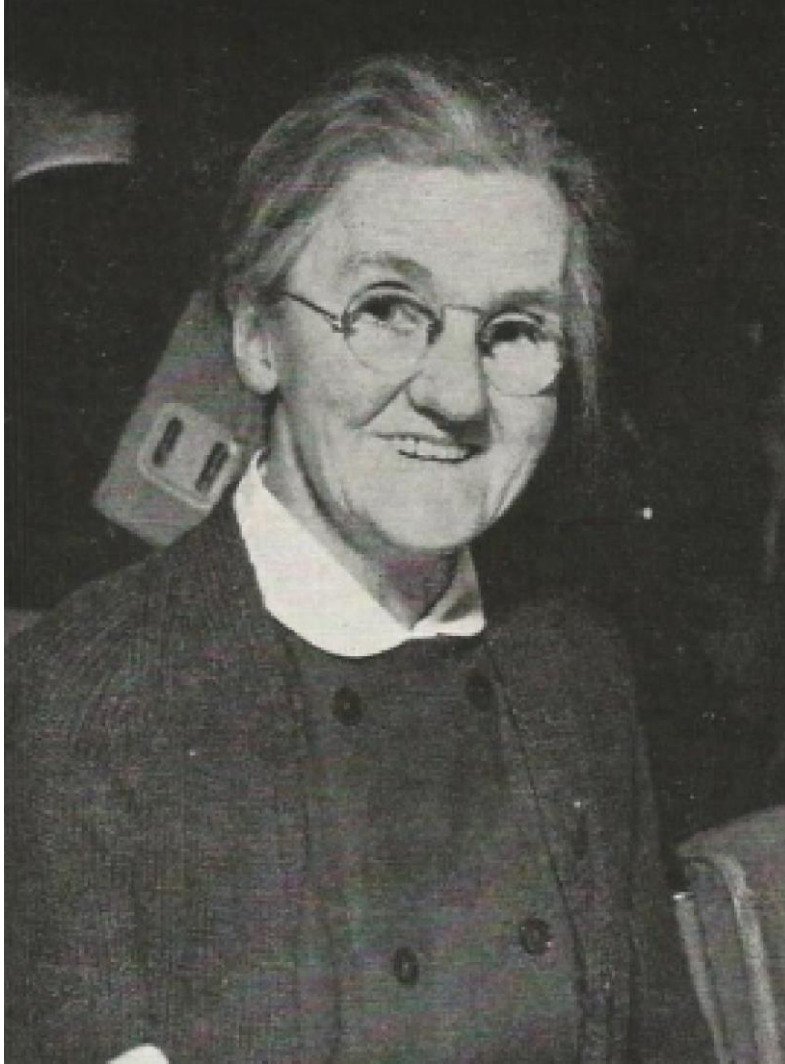
MEMBER – IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON – ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/RCSI

ARREST » RICHMOND BARRACKS » KILMAINHAM GAOL » MOUNTJOY

FACT: NELLIE GIFFORD COLLECTED A LARGE NUMBER OF ITEMS AFTER THE RISING, WHICH NOW FORM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND'S 1916 COLLECTION.

ROSIE HACKETT



1893 -1976

MEMBER — IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON — ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/RCSI

ARREST » RICHMOND BARRACKS » KILMAINHAM GAOL

FACT: ROSIE ORGANISED A STRIKE IN JACOB'S BISCUIT FACTORY IN 1911 WHICH HELPED GET BETTER PAY FOR THE WOMEN WORKING THERE & WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IRISH WOMEN'S WORKERS' UNION (IWWU).

ELIZABETH O' FARRELL



1883 -1957

MEMBER — CUMANN NA MBAN & THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY

GARRISON — THE G.P.O

ARREST » AVOIDED » GRANTED AN AMNESTY DUE TO TASK OF
DELIVERING THE SURRENDER NOTICE.

FACT: ELIZABETH O'FARRELL TRAINED AS A MIDWIFE IN THE NATIONAL
MATERNITY HOSPITAL, HOLLES ST., WHERE A SILVER MEDAL IS
AWARDED TO A STUDENT MIDWIFE IN HER HONOUR EVERY YEAR.

MARGARET SKINNIDER



1893 – 1971

MEMBER – CUMANN NA MBAN (GLASGOW)

GARRISON – ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN/RCSI

ARREST » AVOIDED ARREST – INJURED » 7 WKS, ST. VINCENT'S
HOSPITAL

FACT: MARGARET SKINNIDER WAS A MATHS TEACHER IN GLASGOW
WHO MOVED TO IRELAND WHERE SHE BECAME PRESIDENT OF THE IRISH
NATIONAL TEACHER'S ORGANISATION (INTO) IN THE 1950s.

EASTER WIDOWS

SOME OF THE WOMEN WHO DIDN'T
PARTICIPATE IN THE 1916 RISING BUT WHO
SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF IT.

KATHLEEN CLARKE



1878 – 1972

MEMBER – CUMANN NA MBAN

1916 – KATHLEEN WAS A 'GHOST' SHE WAS GIVEN IRB INFORMATION BY HER HUSBAND TOM IN CASE HE WOULD NOT SURVIVE THE RISING.

IMPACT: BOTH HER HUSBAND TOM CLARKE AND HER BROTHER EDWARD DALY WERE EXECUTED AFTER THE RISING. KATHLEEN WAS PREGNANT AT THE TIME AND LOST HER BABY SOON AFTERWARDS.

FACT: KATHLEEN CLARKE WAS THE FIRST FEMALE LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN. SHE HAD A NEW CHAIN OF OFFICE MADE AND GOT RID OF THE ROYAL PORTRAITS FROM THE MANSION HOUSE, WHERE SHE KEPT A TALKING PARROT AS A PET!

HANNA SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON



1877 - 1946

FOUNDING MEMBER – IRISH WOMEN’S FRANCHISE LEAGUE

1916 - DELIVERED FOOD TO THE REBELS BUT DID NOT TAKE PART IN THE RISING AS SHE WAS A PACIFIST

IMPACT: HANNA’S HUSBAND FRANCIS, A PACIFIST, WAS HELPING TO STOP THE LOOTING WHICH HAD BROKEN OUT ON THE STREETS OF DUBLIN WHEN HE WAS ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO PORTOBELLO BARRACKS, WHERE HE WAS EXECUTED.

FACT: AFTER FRANCIS’ DEATH, HANNA TRAVELLED TO THE US TO CAMPAIGN FOR IRISH INDEPENDENCE. SHE SPENT 18 MONTHS ON A SPEAKING TOUR, WHERE SHE SPOKE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY & MET U.S. PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

Activities

Discuss

- Who do you think was the most interesting woman/who would you most like to have met and why?
- If you could meet any of the women, what questions would you ask them?
- Role play an interview between a journalist and one of the women featured
- Why do you think some of the women featured are photographed at older ages? How would you describe the women's clothing? How does it differ from today's fashion?

Write

- Imagine you were one of the women, write a diary entry describing the events of 1916 or its aftermath
- Using a map of the garrisons, mark in the locations where the various women were stationed

Follow up

- Choose one of the women featured, do some further research and write a short biography of her life
- Find out the names of the other women who participated in the Rising but are not featured in this pack. Compile a list of the women, which organisation they were a member of and which garrison they were in during the Rising – for more information see www.richmondbracks.ie/women-1916/
- Find out which organisation Constance Markievicz is wearing the uniform of in the photo. Markievicz was a member of a number of organisations during her life - including *Inghinidhe na hÉireann*, *Na Fianna*, *the Irish Citizen Army*, *Sinn Féin* & *Fianna Fáil* find out more about these organisations and her role in them.
- Read some of the witness statements from the Bureau of Military history (Kathleen Lynn & Rose McNamara include a good description of events) www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie
- Hanna Sheehy Skeffington was a suffragist. Find out more about her campaign to get the vote for women
- Find the Ballad of Rosanna (Rosie) Hackett on YouTube and research the 1917 event it refers to